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**Author:** Patrycja Matusiak

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Patrycja Matusiak

University of Silesia, Katowice

## Some reflections concerning the usage of *liquamen* in the Roman cookery

The abundance of tastes and smells was a characteristic feature of the ancient cuisine, according to our present knowledge, of course. This wealth distinguishes the Roman cookery from modern European, especially Polish. The fish sauce was an indispensable ingredient of almost every dish. This sauce was called *garum* or *liquamen*, and was ubiquitous not only in Roman cuisine but also in Greek – its wide usage is reflected in literature. The earliest mentions of it are found in the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Cratinus, Pherecrates and Plato Comicus from 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. Unfortunately our knowledge of this highly interesting aspect of ancient life is far from satisfactory, since the only complete source, an ancient “cookbook”, is Apicius’ *De re coquinaria*<sup>1</sup>. Apicius however was not the author of this treatise, which actually is a fourth-century CE compilation, handed down by his name. We can also find many recipes in the works of Cato and in other Roman authors writing on agriculture<sup>2</sup>; last, but not least, many a valuable information is scattered in casual descriptions all over the preserved Greco-Roman literature. These however, more often present an impressive picture of lavish feasts and refined dishes rather than give detailed recipes which would allow us to reconstruct the ancient cuisine.

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<sup>1</sup> See: P. Schmitt-Pantel, S. Unteregge: “Kochbücher. Griechenland und Rom”. In: *Der Neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike [DNP]*. Vol. 6. Stuttgart–Weimar 1999, col. 621–622; P. Schmitt-Pantel: C. Apicius. In: *DNP*. Vol. 2. Stuttgart–Weimar 1997, col. 903, II 10.

<sup>2</sup> See the register of sources: J. André: *L'alimentation et la cuisine à Rome*. Paris 1961, pp. 8–9 and I. Mikołajczyk: *Rzymska literatura agronomiczna*. Toruń 2004, *passim*.

The production of fish sauce was widespread in the ancient world, like other methods of preparing fish like salting, drying, smoking and pickling<sup>3</sup>. Fish sauces are: *garum-liquamen*, *allec* (other forms: *hallec*, *hallex*) and *muria*. *Garum* is a Latin version of the Greek γάρου or γάρος<sup>4</sup>. Pliny the Elder derived this name from a fish called *garos*, which, however, remains unidentified: *quem Graeci garon vocabant*. According to Pliny the first *garum*-sauces were prepared from this particular species<sup>5</sup>. The name *liquamen* was used since 1<sup>st</sup> century CE.

In Apicius the notion *liquamen* is used interchangeably with *garum*, whereas in Gargilius Martialis – with *oenogarum*<sup>6</sup>. Some scholars think it a different kind of sauce<sup>7</sup>, while others consider both *liquamen* and *garum* technical synonyms used in the ancient cuisine<sup>8</sup>. I find myself more inclined to understand it as a general name given to sauce, a name which does not necessarily signify its ingredients, but its quality, distinguishing it e.g. from *allec*, an inferior kind of sauce, considered more suitable for servants<sup>9</sup>. *Muria*, on the other hand, was a salt solution used for preserving fish.

Detailed recipes for the fish sauce are found in Plinius, Gargilius Martialis and in a Byzantine treatise entitled *Geoponica*. Gargilius Martialis wrote his works on agriculture and veterinary medicine in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE, these however are preserved only in excerpts and fragments found in Palladius<sup>10</sup>. *Geoponica* was written somewhere around 950 at the bidding of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus<sup>11</sup>, and actually is nothing more than a new edition of the *Selection of Agricul-*

<sup>3</sup> See: P. Berdowski: "Pochodzenie γάρου i γάρος. Nowa próba interpretacji". In: *Res Historica*. Vol. 5 (*Graecorum et Romanorum memoria*). Ed. L. Morawiecki. Lublin 1998, pp. 12–20.

<sup>4</sup> P. Berdowski quoted from Liddel-Scott two examples: ὁ γάρος and τό γάρος. R. Zahn specified later the form τό γάρου. Composite names of *garum* are derived from this last form: τὸ ἐλαιόγαρον, τὸ ὑδρόγαρον, τὸ ῥξύγαρον, τὸ οἰνόγαρον. Cf. P. Berdowski: "Pochodzenie...", p. 12, n. 10; R. Zahn: "Garum". In: *RE*. Hbd. 13. Stuttgart 1910, col. 841.

<sup>5</sup> Plin.: *N. h.*, XXXI, 93.

<sup>6</sup> Garg. Mart., LXII: "confectio liquaminis quod oenogarum vocant".

<sup>7</sup> See: P. Berdowski: "Pochodzenie...", p. 19, n. 2.

<sup>8</sup> This is an opinion of the translators *De re coquinaria* into Polish, cf. S. Wyszomirski: "Wstęp". In: Apicjusz: *O sztuce kulinarnej ksiąg dziesięć*. Przeł. I. Mikołajczyk, S. Wyszomirski. Toruń 1995, p. 15; likewise J. Andrae, J. Hendricks: "Liquamen". In: *DNP*. Vol. 7. Stuttgart–Weimar 1999, col. 256.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Cato: *Agr.*, 58.

<sup>10</sup> A section concerning the production of the sauce, entitled *Medicinis ex Gargilio excerptis*, is found in the 1875 edition of Pliny; this passage was studied thoroughly by Valentino Rose (*Plinii Secundi quae fertur una cum Gargilii Martialis medicina*). Some scholars, however, question the authorship of Gargilius ascribing the treatise to an unknown writer referred to as pseudo-Gargilius. See also: E. Christmann: "Q. G. Martialis". In: *DNP*. Vol. 4. Stuttgart–Weimar 1998, col. 785, 4.

<sup>11</sup> Idem: "Geoponica. II. Werk des 10. Jh. N. Chr.". In: *DNP*. Vol. 4. Stuttgart–Weimar 1998, col. 940–941; O. Jurewicz: *Historia literatury bizantyńskiej*. Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1984, pp. 176–177.

*tural Treatises* (*Αἱ περὶ γεωργίας ἐκλογαί*) written by Cassianus Bassus from Bithynia in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, which itself was based on Vindanius Anatolius' of Berytus (4<sup>th</sup> century) *Collection of Agricultural Precepts* (*Συναγωγή γεωργικῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων*) and on Didymus' the Younger *Agriculture* (*Γεωργικά*, 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> century).

*Garum* was produced from different kinds of fish. Gargilius Martialis<sup>12</sup> recommends "fishes naturally fat" (*pisces natura pingues*), as eel (*anguilla*), salmon (*salmo*), hering (*aringus*), sardine (*sardina*) and *alausea*. *Geoponica*<sup>13</sup> mentions also other species like anchovy (*ὁ λυκόστομος*), tuna (*ὁ θύννος*), *Mullus barbatus* (*ἡ τρίγλη*), *Atherina hepsetus* (*ἡ ἀθερίνη*), and a small fish called *μαινίς* as suitable; the inhabitants of Bithynia<sup>14</sup> usually produced *garum* from the latter and from mackerel<sup>15</sup>. To that list Pliny adds a small fish (*pisciculus*) called *apua*, which was thought to breed from rain water, and another fish called *lupus*. In the course of production larger fish was divided into parts, while the smaller used as a whole<sup>16</sup>. It is possible that different kinds of *garum* were distinguished depending on the species, or even on the actual part of the fish used in production. Pliny mentions only the intestines, or, perhaps more generally: the entrails (*τὰ ἐγκάτα*)<sup>17</sup> and "other [parts] usually disposed of"<sup>18</sup>. Apart from these, scholars list other parts of the fish which were used in the production of the sauce, among these: the bellies, gills, milt, eggs and blood<sup>19</sup>.

*Garum* was produced in tightly bond vessels of a 3–4 modius (25–35 l)<sup>20</sup> capacity coated with tar. The necessary ingredients were stacked in layers. According to Gargilius Martialis<sup>21</sup>, the first, i.e. the lowest layer consisted of various dried spices as: dill (*anetum*), coriander (*coriandrum*), fennel (*faeniculum*), savory (*satureia*), celery (*apium*), salvia (*sclarea*), mint (*menta*), rue (*ruta*), lovage (*ligusticum*), oregano (*origanum*), thyme (*serpullum*), and other (*vettonica*, *argemonia*, *puleium*). Next came the fish, or its parts. Finally salt measured out in "two fingers" and spread over the latter two formed the third, upmost layer. This pattern was repeated until the vessel was full; which was subsequently covered. The following week it stayed intact; afterwards, for the next 22 days it required stirring

<sup>12</sup> Garg. Mart., LXII.

<sup>13</sup> *Geop.*, XX, 46, 1.

<sup>14</sup> That the book gives a recipe for this quite particular kind of *garum* is most probably due to the fact that Cassianus Bassus was born and lived in Bithynia.

<sup>15</sup> *Geop.*, XX, 46, 3.

<sup>16</sup> Garg. Mart., LXII: "si minores fuerint integris, si maiores in frusta concisis".

<sup>17</sup> *Geop.*, XX, 46, 1; *Apic.*, II, 5, 3: "cum liquamine intestini".

<sup>18</sup> Plin.: *N. h.*, XXI, 93: "intestinis piscium ceterisque, quae abicienda essent".

<sup>19</sup> See: J.C. Carrera Ruiz, J.L. de Madaria Escudero, J. Vives-Ferrándiz Sánchez: "La pesca, la sal y el comercio en el Círculo del Estrecho. Estado de la cuestión". *Gerión* 2000, Vol. 18, p. 49: "intestinos, hipogastrios, branquias, lechada, huevas, sangre".

<sup>20</sup> Garg. Mart., LXII: "vas bene solidum ac bene picatum".

<sup>21</sup> See also: J. André: *L'alimentation*..., pp. 198 sqq.

two or three times a day with a large stick – as if with an oar – so that the lowest layers were also moved. *Geoponica* also recommends exposing the vessels to sunlight for two or even three months; the sauce was actually the product of fermentation caused by the warm temperature<sup>22</sup>. After that time the liquid, i.e. the *garum*, was strained through a densely weaved basket or a special sack (*saccus*). What remained in the vessels was known by the name *allec*<sup>23</sup>.

In *Geoponica* we find a recipe for a γάρου αἱμάτιον<sup>24</sup>, consisting primarily from tuna entrails, its blood and gills, all seasoned with salt, of course. The sauce was ready to eat after only two months of fermentation.

Since the process of fermentation took a long time, other recipes emerged, guaranteeing an instant production of *garum*<sup>25</sup>, facilitated by concentrated sea water. The issue was to boil the ingredients instead of exposing them to the sun. It appears however, that this alternative method did not win much popularity, since the “orthodox” recipes were not abandoned.

According to the recipes given by Apicius, we can distinguish different kinds of *garum* sauce. *Hydrogarum* (τὸ ὑδρογάρον) was *garum* mixed with rain water (*aqua cisternina*) in a 1:7<sup>26</sup> proportion, which was supposed to render it milder. *Hydrogarum* was used chiefly as a meatball-sauce; hence the name given to the whole dish: *hydogarata isicia*<sup>27</sup>. Apart from that however this particular sauce was not applied frequently. *Oxygarum*, as the name itself indicates, was a “hot” *garum* obtained by spicing the sauce with vinegar. Apicius also gives a recipe for an “*oxygarum digestibile*”, i.e. an easily digestible, yet spicy sauce<sup>28</sup>. Used often as an addition to *oxyporum*<sup>29</sup> and as an ingredient of game-sauces<sup>30</sup>. *Oenogarum*, as the name yet again may suggest, consisted of *garum* mixed with wine (the so-called pure *oenogarum* or *oenogarum simplex*)<sup>31</sup>. Applied chiefly as an ingredient of truffle-sauce<sup>32</sup>, oyster meatballs<sup>33</sup>, pheasant<sup>34</sup>, cu-

<sup>22</sup> Seneca and Manilius refer to the final product of the fermentation with a rather unrefined term “sanies”; cf. Sen.: *Ep.* 95, 25; Man.: V, 671.

<sup>23</sup> Plin.: *N. h.*, XXXI, 95: “Vitium huius est allec atque imperfecta nec colata faex”.

<sup>24</sup> *Geop.*, XX, 46, 6.

<sup>25</sup> *Geop.*, XX, 46, 5; see also: J.C. Carrera Ruiz et al.: “La pesca...”, p. 51, 60.

<sup>26</sup> J. André: “Commentaire”. In: Apicius: *L'art culinaire*. Trad. et comm. J. André. Paris 1987, pp. 146–147.

<sup>27</sup> Apic., II, 2, 2.

<sup>28</sup> *I d e m*, I, 34, 1–2.

<sup>29</sup> *I d e m*, I, 32.

<sup>30</sup> *I d e m*, VIII, 4, 2.

<sup>31</sup> Martial also mentions *garum* mixed with Falernum, Mart., VII, 27.

<sup>32</sup> Apic., I, 31, 1–2: “oenogarum in tubera”. Wine is missing on the list of necessary ingredients found in Apicius. Instead he mentions olive oil; hence some scholars read *eleogarum* instead of *oenogarum*. This conjecture however was not accepted, cf. J. André: “Commentaire”..., pp. 141–142. See also: Apic., VII, 14, 3 (where among other ingredients wine is listed).

<sup>33</sup> Apic., II, 1, 6; III, 20, 7.

<sup>34</sup> *I d e m*, II, 5, 4: “oenogarum fasiani”.

cumbers<sup>35</sup> or mallows<sup>36</sup>; also in preparing asparagus<sup>37</sup>, appetizers (such as *gustum* made from stuffed-calabashes)<sup>38</sup>, pork liver<sup>39</sup>, in frying artichokes<sup>40</sup>, fish (such as swordfish, *apua*, *lagita*)<sup>41</sup> and carrots<sup>42</sup>. A detailed recipe for *oenogarum* is preserved in Gargilius Martialis: two sextarii (a little more than one liter) of *garum* mixed with one half sextarii of good wine seasoned with dry spices: a handfull of coriander, dill, savory, 30 or 40 pepper seeds, 3 denars of cinamon, carnations of an aromatic plant called *costum* or of its pulverized root (*Saussurea lappa*) each, and finally half a pound of honey. After mixing the ingredients Martialis recommends cooking them in an iron or bronze vessel until its volume is reduced by half – to one sextarius. Afterwards the boiling decoct was to be strained once more<sup>43</sup>.

*Eleogarum*, although not listed by Apicius among different varieties of the sauce, was a mixture of *garum* and olive oil and is referred to obliquely in his recipes. Missing on Apicius' list is also *garum piperatum*<sup>44</sup>, i.e. *garum* seasoned with pepper, mentioned by Petronius<sup>45</sup>. In the remaining recipes we are told of simple *liquamen* without any additions<sup>46</sup>, although these still are mentioned as its co-ingredients; hence mixing them together in the course of preparing various dishes could have had a similar effect to producing one of the previously mentioned varieties of *garum*.

It should be noted that *liquamen* was not only used as sauce, but also as spice and even as a frying or baking product. Most instructive in this respect is the recipe for the stuffed-calabashes<sup>47</sup> appetizer, where it is to be used three times in various ways: as an ingredient of the stuffing, a spice and finally as sauce, boiled with spices and thickened with starch.

In Apicius' recipes *liquamen* is mentioned ubiquitously. Only those concerning *dulcia domestica*<sup>48</sup> and *perma* ham<sup>49</sup> lack it. We find *liquamen* even in the recipe for *melca*, a beverage made on the basis of sour milk<sup>50</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> *I dem*, III, 6, 1.

<sup>36</sup> *I dem*, III, 8.

<sup>37</sup> *I dem*, IV, 2, 5.

<sup>38</sup> *I dem*, IV, 5, 1; IV, 5, 3.

<sup>39</sup> *I dem*, VII, 3, 1.

<sup>40</sup> *I dem*, III, 20, 1.

<sup>41</sup> *I dem*, IV, 2, 20; IV, 2, 26; IV, 2, 31.

<sup>42</sup> *I dem*, III, 21, 1.

<sup>43</sup> Garg. Mart., LXII.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. J. André: "Commentaire"..., p. 195 and Apic., VIII, 7, 14: "*liquamen piperatum*".

<sup>45</sup> Petr., 36, 3: "Notavimus etiam circa angulos repositorii Marsyas quattor, ex quorum utriculis *garum piperatum* currebat super pisces, qui quasi in euripio natabant".

<sup>46</sup> The pure sauce without any spices was referred to as *gari flos per se*; see: J. André: *L'alimentation...*, p. 199.

<sup>47</sup> Apic., IV, 5, 3.

<sup>48</sup> *I dem*, VII, 11, 1–8.

<sup>49</sup> *I dem*, VII, 9, 1–4.

<sup>50</sup> *I dem*, VII, 11, 9.

A widely known and appreciated variety of *liquamen* was the so-called *garum sociorum*, produced from mackerel on the Island of Heracles near the shores of Carthago Nova. Plinius wrote of it: “nunc a scombro pisce laudatissimum in Carthaginis spartariae cetariis – sociorum id appellatur”<sup>51</sup>. *Garum sociorum* is also mentioned by Horace (“garo de sucis piscis Hiberi”)<sup>52</sup>, while Martial dedicated to this sauce one of his epigrams:

Expirantis adhuc scombri de sanguine primo  
Accipe fastosum, munera cara, garum<sup>53</sup>.

Due to the abundance of mackerels the Island of Heracles was in antiquity called Scombroaria (“Mackerel Island”, modern Escombreras)<sup>54</sup>. It is uncertain whether the name refers to the Spanish (*Scomberomorus maculatus*)<sup>55</sup> or to the Atlantic mackerel (*Scomber scomber*)<sup>56</sup> – differing in length, shape and colour<sup>57</sup>; Romans referred to the Spanish mackerel as *lacerta* (sometimes with the Greek *σαῦρος*) which was also the name given to a lizard<sup>58</sup>. One of its main fishing centers was the previously mentioned Mackerel Island<sup>59</sup> near the shores of Spain<sup>60</sup>. This particular species was also abundant near Betica (especially the city of Car-

<sup>51</sup> Plin.: *N. h.*, XXXI, 94.

<sup>52</sup> Hor.: *S.*, II, 8, 46.

<sup>53</sup> Mart., XIII, 102.

<sup>54</sup> Strabo, III, 4, 6: [...] ἡ τοῦ Ἡρακλέους νῆσος ἤδη πρὸς Καρχηδόνι, ἣν καλοῦσι Σκομβροαρίαν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀλισκομένων σκόμβρων, ἐξ ὧν τὸ ἀριστον σκευάζεται γάρων. This is also attested by Athenaeus, *Deipn.*, III, 121. An interesting phenomenon concerning the name of the island is found in *Deipnosophistae*: apart from the one attested by Strabo Σκομβροαρίαν (see also: E. Hüber: “Carthago Nova”. In: *RE*. Vol. 5. Stuttgart 1897, col. 1624) two other codices (*qui optimi videbantur*) list its epitomes: *σκομβρογαρίαν* and *σκομβροαρίαν* with *g* written above the word. Perhaps the scribes, influenced by Strabo’s judgement, intended to stress the fact that the island was famous not so much because of exceptional mackerels but because of the mackerel *garum*, see G. Kaibel: “Praefatio”. In: Athenaeus. *Dipnosophistae*. Ed. G. Kaibel. Vol. 1–3. Lipsiae 1887–1890, p. XIV.

<sup>55</sup> D’Arcy Wentworth Thompson proposed *Scomber colias* (κολίας) as the name for the Spanish mackerel, see: D’A. Wentworth Thompson: “Byzantios olent lacertos”, *Stat. S.* 4, 9, 13”. *The Classical Review* 1932, Vol. 46, 6, p. 246. Cf. also its short description in Athenaeus: *Deipn.*, III, 121 and Plin.: *N. h.*, XXXII, 146.

<sup>56</sup> This species is mentioned by P. Grimal and T. Monod in a list of fish suitable for the production of *garum*, see P. Grimal, T. Monod: “Sur la véritable nature du ‘garum’”. *REA* 1952, Vol. 54, 1–2, p. 32.

<sup>57</sup> More on these differences see: D’A. Wentworth Thompson: “Byzantios...”, pp. 246–247. An interesting determinant factor is the size of the eyes: the eyes of a Spanish mackerel are bigger than those of other species; hence in Southern Italy it is sometimes called *occhi grossi*.

<sup>58</sup> Sometimes identified with a fish τράχουρος; see: *ibid*.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. G. Malinowski: *Zwierzęta świata antycznego. Studia nad geografią Strabona*. Wrocław 2003, p. 218, see also Plin.: *N. h.*, XXXI, 94.

<sup>60</sup> Plin.: *N. h.*, XXXI, 94: „Scombros [...] ex oceano intrantes capiunt”.

teia)<sup>61</sup> and Mauretania<sup>62</sup>. Mackerels are a pelagic species, which was already noted by Ovid: “nam gaudent pelago [...] scombri”<sup>63</sup>.

Carthago Nova was founded in 228 BC by Hazdrubal<sup>64</sup>, Hannibal’s brother in law<sup>65</sup>. However, the Punico-Phoenician influence in Spain can be traced back to an earlier period. This is partly due to the founding of Phoenician colonies, and partly to the Atlantic trade and mining industry (silver, other metals and salt). Robert Étienne suggested that during their rule in Spain the Barcids monopolized both of these branches, and within them – the production of *garum*<sup>66</sup>. Etienne’s hypothesis is endorsed by modern Spanish scholars<sup>67</sup>.

Apart from *garum sociorum* Pliny also mentions *garum* produced in Klazomenae, Pompei and Leptis<sup>68</sup>. According to the inscriptions<sup>69</sup>, among its main centers of production were also Puteoli, Antium, the coast of Mauretania and Gades<sup>70</sup>.

Yet another kind of *garum* was produced from fish without scales (“e piscibus squama carentibus”)<sup>71</sup>, although it remains uncertain whether the fish was peeled, or it was simply lacking them, as e.g. eel. The former is more likely, since Pliny adds: “aliud vero est castimoniarum superstitioni etiam sacrisque Iudaeis dicatum”<sup>72</sup>, which is explained in the *Leviticus*, where the dietary prohibitions forbade eating fish lacking either fins or scales<sup>73</sup>.

An interesting recipe for a fasting version of the sauce (*liquamen castimoniale*) can be found in Palladius<sup>74</sup>, a 5<sup>th</sup> century author. Its originality is due to the fact, that the sauce was to be produced from overripened pears. The fruit pulp was

<sup>61</sup> See also: Plin.: *N. h.*, IX, 92.

<sup>62</sup> Plin.: *N. h.*, XXXI, 94.

<sup>63</sup> Ovid.: *Hal.*, 94. See also: A. Mikołajczak: “Komentarz”. In: Publiusz Owidiusz Naso: *Sztuka rybołówstwa*. Przeł. A. Mikołajczak. Gnesnae 1997, pp. 97–98.

<sup>64</sup> Called also “the Elder” (to differentiate him from Hazdrubal the Younger, Hannibal’s brother, cf. G. Charles-Picard: *Hannibal*. Warszawa 1971, pp. 9 sqq.) or “the Fair” (cf. S. Lancel: *Hannibal*. Warszawa 2001, pp. 66 sqq.). See also: T. Lenschau: “Hasdrubal”. In: *RE*. Vol. 14. Stuttgart 1912, col. 2469–2470, 5.

<sup>65</sup> See: E. Hüber: “Carthago Nova”. In: *RE*. Vol. 5. Stuttgart 1897, col. 1624.

<sup>66</sup> R. Étienne: “A propos du *garum sociorum*”. *Latomus* 1970, Vol. 29, 2, pp. 302 sqq.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. C. Wagner: “Los Bárquidas y la conquista de la Península Ibérica”. *Gerión* 1999, Vol. 17, p. 289; J.C. Carrera Ruiz et al.: “La pesca...”, pp. 63–64.

<sup>68</sup> Plin.: *N. h.*, XXXI, 94.

<sup>69</sup> See: R. Zahn: “Garum”..., col. 842.

<sup>70</sup> A. Mederos Martín, G. Escribano Cobo: “El periplo de Hannón y la rivalidad gaditana-cartaginesa de los siglos IV–III a. C.”. *Gerión* 2000, Vol. 18, p. 94.

<sup>71</sup> Plin.: *N. h.*, XXXI, 95.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *Lev.*, 11, 9: “haec sunt quae gignuntur in aquis et vesci licitum est omne quod habet pinnulas et squamas tam in mari quam in fluminibus et stagnis comeditis quicquid autem pinnulas et squamas non habet eorum quae in aquis moventur et vivunt abominabile vobis”.

<sup>74</sup> Pallad., III, 25, 12.



to be seasoned with salt and pickled in barrels or clay jars covered with tar. The author assumes that after three months the pulp produced a white juice of a pleasant taste. The colour of the juice could be changed with black grapes. It might seem however, that the name *liquamen* itself points to fish as the main ingredient of the sauce<sup>75</sup>. Perhaps Palladius using this particular notion when referring to a fruit juice thought of similarities in the process of its production (long fermentation, the use of salt etc.) rather than in its actual taste.

Yet more variants of *garum* are found in medical treatises of Aetius Amidenus and pseudo-Galen. Aetius provides a recipe for a fasting sauce (*γάρου νηστικού σκευασία*)<sup>76</sup>, made from water, salt, mushrooms and dried chick pea. In pseudo-Galen's *De remediis parabilibus*, we are told of *garum* called *Ιωάχου του Μαρτυροπολίτου*<sup>77</sup>. Its main ingredients were fasting bread, water, honey, sugar, various fruits, vegetables and spices (raisins, black olives, mint, rue, savory, dill).

Apart from the literary evidence archeological findings are also useful in researching this aspect of the ancient cuisine. Field works in Pompeii and Herculaneum uncover a collection of amphoras, of which 199 bear a sign (*titulus pictus*) informing that they contained fish sauces. These *tituli* often gave some information on the producer of the sauce as well as on its most recent owner<sup>78</sup>. As usual the signs were abbreviated e.g. *liq(uamen) g(ari) f(los) scombr(i)*<sup>79</sup>. According to them, the leading manufacturers of *garum* in the region were A. Umbricius Scaurus, Umbricia Fortunata, Umbricius Abascantus and Umbricius Agathopus<sup>80</sup>. An imitation of *tituli picti* is to be found on a mosaic picture of amphoras found in the villa of Aulus Umbricius Scaurus, the previously mentioned manufacturer of fish sauces<sup>81</sup>.

The smell of the fish sauce definitely was not a pleasant one – it was ridiculed by Martial<sup>82</sup>, alluded to by Petronius<sup>83</sup>, whereas Apicius offered a remedy for improving its quality<sup>84</sup>, obviously in this particular respect: the sauce after being exposed to fresh air, was supposed to be poured into vessels previously fumigated with smoke from burned cypress or laurel. Perhaps the repelling smell was the reason for the interdiction found in a letter to the Frankish king in 9<sup>th</sup> c.: “*liquamen ex omni parte prohibemus*”<sup>85</sup>.

<sup>75</sup> See: J. Andrae, J. Hendricks: “*Liquamen*”..., p. 256.

<sup>76</sup> Aët., XVI, 141.

<sup>77</sup> Ps.-Gal., *De rem. par.*, XIV, 546.

<sup>78</sup> See: R. Curtis: “A Personalized Floor Mosaic from Pompeii”. *AJA* 1984, Vol. 88, 4, p. 561.

<sup>79</sup> *CIL* IV Suppl. 5683.

<sup>80</sup> R. Zahn: “*Garum*”..., col. 844.

<sup>81</sup> More on this mosaic and on *gens Umbricia* in general see R. Curtis: “A Personalized Floor Mosaic...”, pp. 557–566.

<sup>82</sup> Mart., VI, 93; VII, 94, although the former alludes to *corruptum garum*.

<sup>83</sup> Petr., 70, 12: “[cocum] muria condimentisque fetentem”.

<sup>84</sup> Apic., I, 7: “*de liquamine emendando*”.

<sup>85</sup> Anthimus: *Epistula ad Theudericum regem Francorum*, cf. R. Zahn: “*Garum*”..., col. 846.

The repulsive smell of the fish sauce was also alluded to in invectives or vulgar expressions concerning various aspects of life – most notably sexual<sup>86</sup>. The protagonist of Plautus' *Poenulus*, the Carthaginian Hanno, is referred to as “hallex viri”<sup>87</sup>. Robert Curtius understands it on the one hand as drawing its metaphorical meaning from the fact that *allex* (*hallex*) actually consisted of leftovers, which remained in the jars after straining the *garum* (therefore the Plautine epithet is translated by Curtius “the dregs of men”) and as an allusion – obvious to the Roman spectators – to the Western fish-salting industry (perhaps with *garum sociorum*) on the other<sup>88</sup>.

The price of *garum sociorum*, according to Pliny, was 1000 sesterces for 2 congii (6.5–7 l.). In the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE an amphora of *garum* cost 10 denars, which was equivalent to 10 daily payments of a physical laborer; in Roman Palestine *garum* was even more expensive than wine<sup>89</sup>. In the edict of Diocletian the maximum price of *liquamen primum* was 16 denars for one sextarius, whereas of *liquamen secundum* – only 12; measured in congies it was 704 and 528 sesterces for one congie respectively<sup>90</sup>. No wonder the sauce came to be known as “pretiosa malorum piscium sanies”<sup>91</sup>; Martial refers to it with the epithet “nobile”<sup>92</sup>.

Heliogabal's *Vita* mentions the so-called “Sybarite dishes” consisting of olive and fish sauce (“ex oleo et garo”) frequently prepared for the emperor's table. This was said to have been invented by the inhabitants of Sybaris in the same year which brought the disaster to their city-state (510 BC)<sup>93</sup>. While the recipes for Heliogabal's *garum*-dishes need not necessarily be traced back to archaic Magna Graecia, the epithet “Sybarite” itself, proverbially associated with decadent luxury, probably rendered such a sense to the emperor's cuisine<sup>94</sup>.

Sybarite or not, *garum* itself came to be associated with luxury. Seneca mentions it only when complaining about his contemporaries' fondness for excess and superfluity. Among his *exempla* we read of feasts where live fish was taken out of a pool lying under the table and killed directly before serving<sup>95</sup>. A most striking example of extravagance was to kill a fish in a fish sauce (“alios [piscis] necant in

<sup>86</sup> See: R. Curtius: “A Slur on Lucius Asicius, the Pompeian Gladiator”. *TAPHA* 1980, Vol. 110, pp. 58–59.

<sup>87</sup> *Poen.*, 1310.

<sup>88</sup> See: R. Curtius: “A Slur on Lucius Asicius...”, p. 59.

<sup>89</sup> See: J. Jundziłł: *Rzymianie a morze*. Bydgoszcz 1991, p. 111.

<sup>90</sup> III, 6–7.

<sup>91</sup> Sen.: *Ep.* 95, 25; Man., V, 671. See n. 22.

<sup>92</sup> Mart., XI, 27, 2.

<sup>93</sup> SHA, *Heliogabal*, 30, 6. The participants of the feast in Hamilkar's gardens, described in Flaubert's *Salammbô*, were also enjoying an apparently refined dish: a hedgehog in *garum*. See also Apic., IX, 8, 1–5.

<sup>94</sup> Sen.: *Ep.* 95, 25; see also: O. Skutsch: “Seneca. *Letters* 95. 25”. *The Classical Review* 1965, Vol. 15, 2, p. 157.

<sup>95</sup> Sen., *Nat.*, III, 17, 2: “Parum uidetur recens mullus, nisi qui in conuiuiae manu moritur”.

garo”)<sup>96</sup>. This however seems to be a custom widely spread, since Apicius also recommends killing fish (*mullus barbatus*) in *garum sociorum*<sup>97</sup>.

The fish sauce, or perhaps a whole variety of fish sauces, was a very important element not only of the ancient cuisine, but also of many other aspects of the everyday life in the ancient world. Its application was by no means confined to the cuisine itself (unlike modern sauces): we read about *garum* being used in agriculture and, most notably, in medicine, where it was applied in almost every form of medical treatment. An interesting, if not prosaic, example of using this expensive product is to be found in Petronius<sup>98</sup>.

The omnipresence of *garum* / *liquamen* in the ancient cuisine of the Roman period may suggest an analogy with modern South Asia, where the fish sauce plays an equally important role in cooking. Unlike its ancient counterpart, known either as *garum*, *liquamen* or its Greek parallels, it is referred to in an astounding variety of names, which is, naturally, due to the strong linguistic differentiation of Southern Asia. The most widely known fish sauce, known as *nam pla*, is produced in Thailand. *Nuóc mām* is its Vietnam counterpart produced on Phu Quoc, an island in the Gulf of Thailand<sup>99</sup>. Both names have roughly the same meaning: “(salted) fish” + “water”. The same sauce in China is called *yu lu*, or *yee sui*, in Korea *aekjot*, in Japan *shiokara* or *shottsuru*, in Burma *ngan pya ye*, in Laos *pa daek* and *nam pa*, in Cambodia *tirk khngay*, in the Philippines *patis*, and *xinchin* made on the Yucatan peninsula with citrus juice and chillies<sup>100</sup>.

The modern methods of production are relatively simple, resembling the ancient in many respects. The salted fish or shrimps are fermented in jars; after some time the liquid is extracted and subsequently bottled. Like the ancient *liquamen*, its application is very wide in the cuisine of Southern Asia: apart from standing as a sauce by itself, it is also used as basis for other sauces, dips and marinades<sup>101</sup>.

The usage of fish sauce is hardly known in the modern Mediterranean cuisine. In this respect, the ancient cooking habits resemble these found in modern Asia. However, the frequent application of various Mediterranean spices and herbs links the ancient Roman cuisine strongly to its modern descendants, especially to Italian. Its distinct refinement may also suggest a parallel with the modern French cuisine.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Plin.: *N. h.*, IX, 66.

<sup>98</sup> G. Schmelting: “Trimalchio’s Menu and Wine List”, *CP* 1970, Vol. 65, 4, p. 249, n. 7: “as a laxative”.

<sup>99</sup> For an interesting comparison of *garum* and *nuóc mām* with the register of species of fish used in the production of these sauces see P. Grimal, T. Monod: “Sur la véritable nature du ‘garum’...”, pp. 27–38.

<sup>100</sup> See: [www.weird-food.com](http://www.weird-food.com), [www.pichaifishsauce.com/fishsauce.html](http://www.pichaifishsauce.com/fishsauce.html). A recipe for modern *garum* and addresses of the restaurants, where we can taste it (unfortunately, only in France and Spain) can be found on: [www.foodreference.com/html/artgarum.html](http://www.foodreference.com/html/artgarum.html).

<sup>101</sup> Cf. J. Brennan: *The Original Thai Cookbook*. New York 1984, p. 287.

Therefore, it seems reasonable to consider the Roman cuisine, as it is presented in Apicius and various literary narratives (e.g. Trymalchio's or Nasidienus' banquet<sup>102</sup>), as *fusion* – a notion frequent nowadays in describing a conglomerate of cooking habits from different cultures.

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<sup>102</sup> Hor.: *S.*, II, 8.

Patrycja Matusiak

### Kilka uwag na temat użycia sosu rybnego (*liquamen*) w rzymskiej kuchni

#### Streszczenie

Przedstawiony tekst, oparty na analizie źródeł antycznych, w sposób syntetyczny przedstawia naszą dzisiejszą wiedzę o sposobach produkcji sosu rybnego i jego wykorzystania w rzymskiej kuchni. Artykuł ten jest także próbą pokazania roli i symboliki sosu rybnego w kulturze antycznej. Porównanie kuchni antycznej z dzisiejszą egzotyczną kuchnią południowoazjatycką, w której używa się sosów rybnych, wytwarzanych w podobny sposób jak *liquamen*, może stanowić również punkt wyjścia do szerszej analizy porównawczej zarówno od strony kulinarnej, jak i kulturowej.

Patrycja Matusiak

### Ein paar Bemerkungen über die Gebrauchsweise der Fischsoße (*liquamen*) in römischer Küche

#### Zusammenfassung

Der vorliegende, auf der Analyse von antiken Quellen fußende, Text zeigt den heutigen Wissensstand über verschiedene Herstellungsmethoden der Fischsoße und deren Anwendung in der römischen Küche. Es wird hier versucht, die Rolle und die Symbolik der Fischsoße für antike Kultur zu veranschaulichen. Verglichen wird die antike Küche mit der gegenwärtigen, exotischen, südasiatischen Küche, wo eine ganze Reihe von den, ähnlich wie *liquamen* hergestellten Fischsoßen verwendet wird; das kann weitere, groß angelegte vergleichende Untersuchungen im Bereich der Küche und der Kultur in Gang bringen.